
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 11, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. SEWARD made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 332.]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the petition of Auton L. C. Portman, praying compensation for his services as Dutch interpreter for Commodore M. C. Perry, while conducting his late negotiation with the authorities of Japan, have had the same under consideration, and now report :

That, upon a careful review of the report (No. 315) made in this case by this committee at the last session of Congress, and concurring entirely in the views therein presented, they hereby readopt the same, and report a bill in accordance therewith, with a recommendation that it pass.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, *January 21, 1857.*

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the memorial of Auton L. C. Portman, late clerk to Commodore M. C. Perry, while in command of the East India squadron, praying additional compensation for his services as Dutch interpreter during the negotiations with the Japanese authorities, have had the same under consideration, and now report :

That it appears from the memorial that Mr. Portman was the clerk of Commodore M. C. Perry, while in command of the East India squadron, and, during the negotiations with the Japanese authorities, acted as Dutch interpreter for the United States; that, owing to the refusal of the Japanese ministers to conduct the negotiations in the Chinese language, a large amount of interpreting and translating was thrown upon and discharged by the memorialist; that the only compensation received by him for those delicate and responsible duties was the salary of five hundred dollars per annum, at which he was rated on the books of the ship; and he therefore asks that such additional compensation shall be now allowed him as, together with that

heretofore received, shall be proportionate to the importance of the services rendered.

The statements of the memorial are supported by the certificates of Commodore M. C. Perry, commanding, and Captains Henry H. Adams, Sidney S. Lee, and Franklin Buchanan, attached to the expedition.

From the report of Commodore Perry in relation to that expedition, it appears that the time employed in conducting his negotiations with the Japanese government embraced a period of a little less than one year, during which, it is reasonable to presume, the memorialist was required, in addition to his regular duties as clerk, also to perform those of interpreter.

In reply to a letter of inquiry, addressed by the committee to the Navy Department, the Secretary, under date of July 16, 1856, says : " Clerks in the naval service are appointed by officers entitled to them, with the sanction of the department. My impression has always been, that, in selecting their secretaries and clerks, the commodores endeavored to secure such as could aid them in their correspondence by their attainments in different languages. I am not aware of any precedent for extra pay on account of translating or interpreting performed by their clerks."

Whilst the committee are disposed to concur with the Secretary of the Navy in the opinion here indicated, that for the ordinary translating and interpreting incident to their position clerks in the naval service should not be entitled to receive extra compensation, yet they cannot but regard the present case as resting upon entirely different grounds. Mr. Portman's duties as interpreter in the conduct and negotiation of a treaty between our government and that distant and secluded empire involved much and delicate responsibility. They were beyond and additional to his regular duties as clerk to the commodore, and for their performance he is, in the opinion of the committee, properly entitled to additional compensation.

In estimating the amount of additional compensation, the committee are of opinion that one thousand dollars would be just and reasonable. They therefore report a bill in his favor for that amount, and recommend its passage.